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The booklet contains 6 papers presented at a conference sponsored by the Inter-American Institute, Pan American College, Edinburg, Texas. As indicated by the titles, the papers cover the following aspects of the role of the Mexican American in the history of the Southwest: (1) Mexican Heritage--Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, (2) The Historical Heritage of the Mexican American in 19th Century Texas, An Interpretation, (3) The Migrant Worker and the Bracero in the U.S., (4) Mexican-American Land Issues in the United States, (5) The Rio Grande Frontier--Bridge or Barrier, and (6) Cultural Contributions of the Mexican American. Included in the booklet is a bibliography of related literature. (FJ)

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THE ROLE OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IN THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST

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THE MEXICAN HERITAGE
OF
TEXAS-NEW MEXICO-ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA

By
MARVIN ALISKY

Most North Americans know vastly more about Europe than they do about Latin America.[1] They don't have to be told where Paris is geographically or what language is spoken in Sweden. But they wonder, "Is La Paz in Bolivia or Baja California?" Many citizens of the United States blurt out, "What'd mean they don't speak Spanish in Brazil?" Yankees plan a December excursion to Argentina, to spend a "White Christmas down there," oblivious of season reversal. The only way to have a white Christmas in Buenos Aires is to take an albino to dinner or to watch dandruff commercials on Belgrano television.

Such remarks are not from the characters on NBC's "Laugh-In" but average citizens of the United States. At least in the Southwest, from Texas to California, we might assume an awareness of our Mexican heritage. The borderlands abound with tourists, and millions of Mexican-Americans speak Spanish. The situation is not comparable to the Midwest, where Polish-Americans from South Bend to Pittsburgh may speak some Polish. After all, their mother country is not right next door. For five million Mexican-Americans, their ancestral culture indeed flourishes just down the road a hundred miles or so. In some communities from Brownsville to San Diego, Mexican music and art and slogans engulf, on both sides of an international boundary line, a demarcation which has more political than cultural significance as far as differentiating United States from Mexican factors.

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[1]Murkland, Harry B., "Editors' Blind Spot," *Americas*, May 1949, pp. 12-14; Christensen, Asher N., ed., *The Evolution of Latin American Government* (New York, 1951), pp. 3-5.

In this age of a Boobtube Boswell, a Panavision Peppys, and a Cinerama Chronicler, popularized reporting on Latin America has few edifying examples. Mass media editors still face Europe, the lands of most of our ancestors. The United States did not move our border in 1848 down around the Mexicans of our Southwest, and lately Chicano political postures have been in the news. Our black citizens did come from Africa and their new search for cultural heritage is in the world spotlight. But for a majority of us, Ellis Island symbolized North American immigration. Even after Pearl Harbor in 1941 and Korea since 1950 and Vietnam since 1964, as a nation we tend to face Europe, not Asia, let alone Latin America.

"Operation Intercept" on the Mexican border or the Peruvian expropriations or the Bolivian détat or the doings of Castro can capture a headline. But the sustained interest Europe automatically receives in the press and in our textbooks and in the emphasis of our formal education—from history to literature—never fully extends to Latin America.

There are exceptions. Pan American College gives the Rio Grande Valley an Inter-American Institute under the able direction of Dr. T. Lawrence White. Thirty years ago, professors at the University of Texas set up the first full-scale Latin American Institute in Austin, forcing their regents and administration to go along with the inter-American idealism then generated by the faculty.

In recent decades, California and Arizona and New Mexico universities have expanded course offerings about Latin America, but even in the threadbare days of the 1930's, in Texas from high school to graduate school, one could find some instruction in the history of Mexico.

Even at a conference near the Mexican border, with an audience including many Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans, who understand both Spanish and Mexican culture, it is not inappropriate to reflect for a few moments about history, to let a few events of yesteryear come echoing across the canyons of time. For even among well educated citizens with an orientation towards bicultural perspective with which our borderland blesses us, we do become so entangled in the details of everyday life, we tend to forget the Mexican heritage of our Southwest.

In what is now the continental United States, from New England to the California coast, there were less than one-half million Indians in the huge, empty continent when a handful of colonists came to Virginia and to Massachusetts. No census reports, no written records were left, but the archaeologists can use a shovel for a reading-glass and the earth for documents, reconstructing past societies from layers of earth, broken pots, bones, and the science of Carbon 14 radiation tracing.[2]

In what is now the Republic of Mexico and the five Central American republics north of Panama, anthropologists estimate that there were at least 15 million Indians when the first Spaniards ventured from the Caribbean onto the Mexican mainland in 1519.

During three centuries of the Spanish colonial empire in the New World, scarcely 300,000 Spaniards came to Mexico and Central America from the Old World. Thus, in Mexico an elaborate basic social structure of Indian civilizations acquired a surface coating of Hispanic culture.[3]

In the United States-to-be, North Americans cut back a wilderness of trees, edging westward with farms, and encountering relatively few Indians, despite a dramatic emphasis to the contrary in motion pictures and television dramas. In Mexico, politically it may have been New Spain, but culturally it was the empires of the Aztecs and Mayas and Zapotecs and Mixtecs, incorporating the language and religion and surface culture of their conquerors; in North America, the Colonization, and in Mexico, the Conquest. English and Dutch and French settlers brought their wives and children with them from Europe. Spaniards came alone and married Indian maidens.

Think for a moment of the vast deserts of Arizona and New Mexico before interstate highways and air-conditioned motels made travel comfortable. Think of the Rocky Mountains without detailed maps or jet flights which permit us to escape the hurdles of torturous terrain.

In the 16th Century, no regiments of Spaniards backed up the few intrepid explorers probing into the unknown lands to the

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[2]Sauer, Carl, *Handbook of South American Indians*, Vol. VI (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 487.

[3]Vaillant, George, "The Aztecs of Mexico" (Garden City, New York, 1941); McWilliams, Carey, "North from Mexico (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1949), p. 39.

north and west of central Mexico. The dimensions of the spirit of the explorers loomed large, but the numbers of Spaniards involved were small. Not brigades nor even battalions, but a corporal's guard, a handful of Spaniards, roamed across thousands and thousands of square miles without any real clues to what really awaited them in our Southwest.

The colonial exploration was a drama-in-miniature. The few actors were puppet-like figures moving against an enormous backdrop. The ventures were heroic in scope. From Tubac, Arizona, Juan Bautista de Anza began his march across the California desert to San Gabriel in 1775. The next year, de Anza, again from Tubac, led a second expedition to the missions of Southern California and on northward to San Francisco.

Even earlier, between 1528 and 1602, a few Spaniards had explored our borderlands from Galveston to present-day San Diego, from Monterrey in Mexico to Santa Fe in New Mexico. The myth of stockpiles of gold set them in motion, and the Indians encountered here and there lured them still further northward and westward with elaborations about golden cities, hoping to get the invaders to leave what is today the Southwest.

Down in Mexico City, the old Conquistador himself, Hernán Cortés, in 1536 was feeling frisky. Francisco Vásquez de Coronado was the executive officer for the troops of Cortés. Antonio de Mendoza, first Viceroy of New Spain, must have been very unhappy. As the chief representative of King Charles of Spain in the New World, Mendoza was supposed to be supreme authority in Mexico. But instead, Mendoza really took orders from Cortés, who had conquered Mexico for Spain back in 1520. And with Coronado's troops the principal constabulary force and mainstay of power, and with Coronado loyal to Cortés, what could the poor old Viceroy do? At that point, the prayers of Viceroy Mendoza apparently were answered. Texas was heard from.

Survivors of the Navárez expedition, shipwrecked off the Texas coast near Matagorda Bay, had made their way around Texas for four years after their ship had gone down in 1532. Two of the survivors, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and an African Spanish citizen named Estebanico, reached Mexico City with stories about Seven Cities of Cíbola, up northward, where gold awaited any takers.

Cabeza de Vaca had not actually seen any of the gold himself.

He just believed the Indians living in what today are the cities of Galveston, Houston, San Antonio, and El Paso.

Viceroy Mendoza did not believe the tall tales any more than Cortés did. In politics, however, even in colonial times, an authenticated lie might be a splendid weapon to divide the forces of the political opposition. So the Viceroy sent a priest, Fray Marcos de Niza, northward and westward. After a year, Father Niza returned. He had not seen the golden cities either, but he had heard very enthusiastic reports. Besides there were Indians up north from central Mexico, likely converts.

So with Church blessings, the Viceroy ordered Coronado and the best troops loyal to Cortés, to head for what is today our Southwest. With the exception of General Pershing's expedition into Mexico in search of Pancho Villa in 1916, the Coronado expedition must be the wildest goose chase in North American history. No golden cities were found. But the Viceroy was able to reassert his full authority with the Coronado forces out of town. And fortunately, the tall tales did bring Spanish explorers northward into Arizona, then eastward through New New Mexico and Texas.

In 1542, while Coronado was moving slowly southward again from Texas towards Mexico City, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sailed up the west coast of Mexico, discovering, that September, the Bay of San Diego. With no charts or any inkling of what lay ahead, Cabrillo moved on to San Clemente, more recently, also, discovered by Richard Nixon to be a nice place to rest.

By 1718, Spanish authorities had a settlement in San Antonio and by 1781 another in Los Angeles. From Texas to California, Spaniards were in charge, writing their own history. The majority of the people they governed, however, were a mixture of Indian and Spanish, the mestizo combination which today is the true heart and soul of Mexico.

And so it has come to pass that too many of us were exposed to history books in school which emphasized the "Spanish" achievements of the colonial period, but de-emphasized the "Mexican" aspects of the borderlands of our own century.

The formal title of the brief paper deliberately states the four principal states of the Southwest, for there are differences in the appreciation of the Mexican heritage among the residents of these four states.

In the Texas borderlands, we usually find a healthy, positive

appreciation of the word "Mexican," whether applied to the half-century of reform in the Republic of Mexico known as the Revolution (with a capital "R"), or whether casual conversations of Anglo-Americans may be referring to Mexican food or Mexican music.

Contrast the frequent use of the word "Mexican" in the Rio Grande Valley with the infrequent use of the word in parts of Southern California. Every year the city of Santa Barbara, California, has a *Fiesta* with parades. Riding horses, motorized floats, and in convertibles, Santa Barbara's civic-minded citizens dress as Spanish dons. "Spanish" food is served to people in "Spanish" costumes, to celebrate Mexico's independence from Spain. By the same lack of logic, we should dress as British Redcoats on the Fourth of July! But those are the fellows our patriotic ancestors tossed out. We are English-speaking and appreciate many facets of English culture, ranging from great literature and a free press to jurisprudence and representative government. But we are not English, but Americans or *Norteamericanos* or *Estadounidenses.*

Similarly, the Spanish-surnamed citizens of our Southwest may be Spanish-speaking and even enamored with some facets of Hispanic culture. But they are of Mexican origin in most cases, and at least among the younger generation of Mexican-Americans there is a pride in that Mexican heritage.[4]

All Anglo-Americans of Southern California are not patronizing, misusing "Spanish" as a softer euphemism for a presumedly harsher "Mexican" adjective. Nor can we assume that all Texans are conversely enlightened. But the informal observations of this one political scientist and former reporter, during most of my life, add up to one generalization. Borderland Texans appear to be more entwined with things Mexican than do borderland Californians, with Arizonans rating a good honorable mention after the Texans.

As for New Mexico, we have a special set of historical and geographical circumstances. Santa Fe epitomized the isolation of colonial days, of scant wagon trails, at the outpost of Spanish American Empire. The self-proclamation of Spanish origin on the part of many Spanish-speaking citizens of New Mexico can

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[4]Samora, Julian, ed., *La Raza* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); Romano, Octabio I., ed., *El Espejo* (Berkeley, California: Quinto Sol Publications, 1969).

be defended in terms of history and geography. Before jet flights, borderland traffic linked San Antonio and El Paso to Mexico City, but rarely Santa Fe. And in an earlier pre-railroad, pre-automobile age, northern New Mexico had wrapped itself even tighter in its geographical blanket of isolation from Mexico and from mainstream United States.

Mexico and the Southwest of the United States, so much in the news during the Mexican War of 1846-1848, were almost forgotten by North Americans during the decades that followed. The U. S. Civil War forced Americans to focus inward on our South and Midwest. And the early decades of this century found a fledgling world power concentrating on European affairs from the vantage point of Washington, no longer a village on the Potomac, but a city able to marshal vast sums of money and power, as the Old World again looked to the New World for help in time of total war, as the Kaiser let loose his guns of August.

As early as 1884, Helen Hunt Jackson published her novel, *Ramona.*[5] In this book, nostalgia of old "Spanish" California acquainted millions of American readers with chivalrous dons and aristocratic doñas. Then followed decades of literature in the United States romanticizing the Hispanic element of Southwestern history, even as it occasionally noted the more accurately-named Mexican elements abounding from California to Texas.

Recent decades have seen numerous repudiations of the over-romanticizing of Hispanic strands in the historical fabric of Southwestern history and literature. Mary Austin, in her 1932 autobiography, *Earth Horizon,*[6] attacked the mythical history springing from California which dwelt on "Spanish" traditions, but ignored the Mexican heritage of our Southwest. She warned of the many efforts of writers to re-create a sense of the past out of sentiment for "the old Missions, and *Ramona.*"

It was not Spaniards from the Iberian peninsula who perfected the methodology of cattle ranching so vital to the Southwest. The hard-riding *vaqueros* who drove cattle from Guadalajara into Texas were culturally and ethnically Mexican, from

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[5]Robinson, Cecil, *With the Ears of Strangers: The Mexican in American Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963), p. 135.

[6]Austin, Mary, *Earth Horizon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), p. 186.

their sombreros to their saddles, from their folk-singing to their frontiersmanship.[7]

A lexicographical legacy from Mexico lives in the speech of ranchers from Kingsville, Texas, to Flagstaff, Arizona. Words such as "Rodeo" and "corral" changed not at all from the Spanish to the English languages. But the phrase "da y vuelta" to indicating twisting a rope round a saddle horn became "dolly welter" in Texas cowpoke lingo.

Hollywood in the 1930's gave us the bandits with Leo Carrillo accents, each one furnished with two *pistolas* and a big moustache. Even today television has its Frito Bandito. But helping make Mexican culture more meaningful have been excellent television travelogues and documentaries which went beyond the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco and the Plaza de México bullring into the more significant scenes of the late President John F. Kennedy visiting the spectacular campus of the National University of Mexico in 1962, network news reports on the Falcón Dam on the Rio Grande, and similar positive reporting via news film.

As I encounter ranchers in Arizona wearing chaps, I recall that both the garment and the term came from Mexicans who had used "chaparreros." The Mexican "la riata" became the Southwestern "lariat." The Mexican "mesteno" became the Texas mustang. The Mexican saddle had its "cinchas" until it became our saddle cinch. In fact, throughout the Southwest, we "savy" many Mexican traditions of ranching and mining because that word "savy" was corrupted from "sabe." So universally accepted has "savy" become, that it has been grammatically canonized in Webster's dictionary.

For more than a decade, one of the most popular television programs in the United States has been "Bonanza." That very word "bonanza" has meant a rich deposit of ore in the mining camps of the Southwest. If we but shift our accent slightly, the Mexican mining term "bonanza" might remind us also of part of the Mexican heritage of our Southwest. From Los Angeles to Houston, our modern homes feature patios with Mexican-style tiles, some aspects of adobe architecture, and a back-

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[7]Lea, Tom, *The King Ranch* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), 2 Volumes; Tinker, Edward I., *The Horsemen of the Americas and the Literature They Inspired*, 2nd Edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967).

yard barbecue grill which came to us from Monterrey. Somewhere on the premises, North American teenagers are embracing guitars, decades after Mexican youngsters kept the guitar from becoming obsolete in North America. The music or electrically amplified noise from our guitars bears little resemblance to Mexican music, for sure, or even to our own music, for that matter. But acculturation works both ways. Mexicans were targets for coca-colazation, then pepsi-colazation, then diet-colazation. As Mexicans have become urbanized and industrialized, to some extent, they have become North-Americanized.

Conversely, as millions of United States citizens have joined the ranks of tourists in Mexico, they have returned not only with serapes, tequilla, but with an appreciation of Mexican fine arts and Mexican casualness as a defense mechanism against the split-second tyranny of modern living and its by-product, the ulcer.

Hapless residents of Minnesota or Iowa or New York or Maine or the Dakotas can only grab a sample of Mexican culture during a brief vacation. But for those of us who live in the Southwest, history and geography have combined to provide us a two-culture borderland, where the subtle combinations of Old World and New World heritage blend into the colorful way of life we can enjoy and visitors can envy. We do not have to rely on glossy pictures from *Holiday* magazine or the *National Geographic*. We merely have to permit our own inclination towards appreciation of other traditions to co-existence in our consciousness with our own traditions. The Southwest really is as colorful as the travel folders claim. And our history and present-day living prove it.

THE HISTORICAL HERITAGE
OF THE
MEXICAN AMERICAN
IN 19TH CENTURY TEXAS,
AN INTERPRETATION

By
FELIX D. ALMARÁZ, JR.

The Mexican American, in a legal sense, originated in February, 1848, with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which terminated the War of the United States against Mexico and extended the western limits of the victorious Anglo-American republic from the Rio Grande to the Pacific Ocean. In this context, the former citizens of Mexico who chose to remain in the borderlands gradually realized that the international boundary which crossed over them reduced their status to that of an unwanted, hardly tolerable, minority group.

According to one interpretation, the Mexican is a *mestizo,* the offspring of the union of the Hispanic colonizer and the Indian aborigine. In the colonial society of New Spain in North America, the mestizo element began with Martín Cortés, son of the conqueror, and Marina, after which the process of *mestisaje* effectively broadened the social base that within five centuries the mestizo constituted the dominant stratum in modern Mexico.

In 20th Century Texas, the influence of the mestizo has been slight. More pronounced has been the Hispanic heritage, which merged with the Mexican legacy, in terms of place-name geography, legal concepts, architectural designs, literary themes, public celebration, and linguistics. As a product of the borderland environment, the Mexican American is either (a) the descendant of Hispanic-Mexican settlers of the 18th or 19th centuries, or (b) the offspring of later immigrants, or (c) a recent immigrant. In any event, the Mexican American in Texas,

unlike his counterpart in the former interior provinces of the Southwest, has encountered a seemingly insurmountable barrier which has tended to subordinate his cultural values in favor of measurable accomplishments of the machine culture. Specifically, he has had to live under the stigma of 1836. Proponents of the superiority of Anglo-Texan institutions contended that Santa Anna's wartime decisions and actions at the Alamo and Goliad were indefensible. Accordingly, the combatants at San Jacinto are categorized as heroes and cowards. Dismissed completely is the interpretation that the War for Texan Independence was a peripheral reaction to an ideological struggle of federalism versus centralism which had been gathering momentum for nearly a decade. In this conflict, some patriotic Mexicans, such as Valentín Gómez-Farías, chose to oppose Santa Anna's centralist tendencies within the governmental structure, while others in Texas, such as Lorenzo de Zavala, José Antonio Navarro, Juan N. Seguin, and José Francisco Ruíz, opted for political separatism and openly supported the Texan cause.[1] Thus, from the Anglo-American point of view, the events leading up to the military confrontation of 1836 have been recounted sufficiently, one effect of which has been the almost complete oversight of *Tejano* contributions to 19th Century Texas history.

In the second decade of that century, some Hispano-Tejanos in San Antonio and Nacogdoches embraced Father Miguel Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores*, and, for a brief time, the province served as a battleground in the wars for Mexican independence.[2] Interestingly, the inhabitants of Laredo remained loyal to the viceregal government throughout the vicissitudes of the conflict. In 1821, however, they accepted the political changes without comment.[3] One profound impact of the Hidalgo revolution on the Rio Grande frontier was the abandonment of the presidio system, a factor which contributed to an upsurge of Indian

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[1]Almaraz, Felix D., Jr., "Historical Origin of the Mexican-American in Texas: An Interpretation," published paper prepared for the Office of Bilingual and International Education, Texas Education Agency, July 15-19, 1968, pp. 1-2.

[2]Almaraz, Felix D., Jr., "The Administration of Manuel María de Salcedo of Texas: 1808-1813" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1968), pp. 134-259.

[3]Grimm, Agnes G., *Llanos Mesteñas Mustang Plains* (Waco: Texian Press, 1968), p. 16.

attack on the river settlements[4] and which retarded colonization of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.[5]

For Mexican Texans, independence was a virtually painless transfer of allegiance from one government to the next, with Antonio Martinez serving as transitional governor. In 1822, Colonel José Félix Trespalacios assumed provisional command of the province and slowly guided its development until political architects in Mexico City, emulating the United States, created a federalist structure which downgraded the importance of Texas to that of a department with a *jefe político* as the principal officer at San Antonio.[6]

Subsequent to the Adoption of the Mexican Constitution of 1824, the task devolved on the dual state of Coahuila and Texas to draft a basic document of government. Acting as a viable link between the Anglo-American colonists and the Mexican authorities, Felipe Enrique Neri, formerly the Barón de Bastrop, participated in the Saltillo constitutional convention out of which emanated the state constitution of 1827.[7]

Although the new document definitely shifted the center of frontier control from San Antonio to Saltillo, Mexican Tejanos in Béxar enjoyed the privilege of sending José Antonio Navarro and Miguel Arciniega as deputies to the first session of the legislature.[8] As the business of inaugurating the machinery of state government preoccupied the minds of politicians in Saltillo, over in East Texas an event of local importance occurred which precipitated drastic changes in the relationship of the national officials and the foreign immigrants.

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[4]Raht, Carlysle Graham, *The Romance of Davis Mountains and Big Bend County: A History* (Odessa: The Rahtbooks Co., 1963), p. 46.

[5]Grimm, *Llanos Mesteñas*, p. 26.

[6]Menchaca, Antonio, *Memoirs*, Yanaguana Society Publications, Vol. II (San Antonio: Yanaguana Society, 1937), p. 20.

[7]Shortly after the initial draft of the constitution had been completed, Neri died at the residence of Juan Antonio Padillo in Saltillo on January 23, 1825. It was not until March 11, 1827, however, that state authorities promulgated the constitution.
Wharton, Clarence, *The Isle of Mal Hado and Other Sketches: Three Hundred and Fifty Years of Texas History* (Houston: The Fletcher Young Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 49-50; Vigness, David M., *The Revolutionary Decades*, 1810-1836 (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1965), p. 65; Robinson, Duncan W., *Judge Robert McAlpin Williamson: Texas' Three-Legged Willie* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1948), p. 43.

[8]Vigness, *Revolutionary Decades*, p. 130.

The Anglo-American migration into Mexican Texas was part of a larger westward movement which originated in the Mississippi Valley at the beginning of the 19th Century. The availability of arable land in Texas on very liberal terms, coupled with financial depression and stringent agrarian laws in the United States, provided the impetus for the flow of Anglo-American settlers in the 1820's across the Sabine and Red rivers. In fact, two Tejanos, Erasmo Seguín and Martín de Veramendi, personally accompanied Stephen F. Austin from Louisiana to Texas to commence the work of alien colonization during the incumbency of Governor Martínez.[9]

The initial waves of immigrants, characterized by the colonies of Austin and Green DeWitt, generally produced hard-working, law-abiding, God-fearing pioneers. These early arrivals promptly settled on the best lands between the Colorado and Brazos rivers. In contrast, the later colonists, particularly in the late 1820's and early 1830's, represented a more aggressive frontier type of individual who settled on the marginal areas and questioned Mexico's right to impose restrictions on foreigners.[10]

The event in East Texas which aroused the suspicion of the Mexican government toward the apparent loyalties of Anglo-Americans was the Fredonian Rebellion which Hayden Edwards launched in 1826. Actually, Edwards, who received a grant to introduce families into the area around Nacogdoches, was not a militant type. By frontier standards he was a polished, educated gentleman of honor. Yet, the environment of East Texas contained so many Anglo transients, Cherokees, and old-time families from the Spanish period that, in October 1825, on his own initiative, Edwards demanded documentary proof of their land claims. The reaction which followed became entangled in the politics of Nacogdoches. One contest centered on the selection of a captain of the local militia, an office which the opposition candidate, José Antonio Sepúlveda, won. The next disappointment to Edwards' plans occurred in January 1826, when his brother-in-law, Chichester Chaplin, lost the election for the position of *alcalde* to Samuel Norris who succeeded with the support of the Mexican population. Hence, Edwards, thwarted on two occasions, sensed his base of control eroding within his

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

[10] Almaráz, "Historical Origin of the Mexican-American in Texas," p. 6.

own area of influence. As a matter of fact, he soon found himself and his colonists persecuted by an aggressive faction of lawless individuals who coalesced around James Gaines, brother-in-law of Alcalde Norris. The power struggle continued throughout the spring of 1826 and culminated in Edwards proclaiming the founding of the new Republic of Fredonia. The official Mexican reaction was swift and effective. Armed forces from Béxar, led by Colonel Mateo Ahumada and Jefe Político Antonio Saucedo, extinguished the short-lived rebellion and temporarily restored tranquility in East Texas.[11] To concerned politicians in Béxar, Saltillo, and Mexico City, the Fredonian episode, although abortive, served as a pointable, in fact as a warning, that uncontrolled foreign immigration would invite further problems.

The immediate result was the sending of a scientific expedition into Texas, in 1828, to conduct a thorough inspection of the province from the Rio Grande to the Sabinas. The investigation of General Manuel Mier y Terán, considered by his contemporaries as the outstanding intellectualist in uniform, touched all phases of activity in Mexican Texas, military and political. His detailed recommendations, most of which he submitted in 1829, led directly to the enactment of the Law of April 6, 1830, by which its chief author and sponsor, Lucas Alamán, sought to curtail the influx of Anglo-Americans into Mexican territory.[12]

In effect, the decree of 1830 became the pivotal point in the relations of the Anglo-American communities and the national government. The success of this legislation depended largely on the interpretation given to it by Mier y Terán, who, as commissioner and commandant general, discharged his multiple duties at Matamoros. The special exemptions which he granted to Austin and DeWitt virtually nullified the prohibitive clauses of the law. Still, in spite of the general's humanistic approach to frontier administration, the deployment of soldiers in the eastern sector of Mexican Texas aggravated a tense situation. In particular, the arbitrary decisions of Colonel John Davis

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[11]Crockett, George Louis, *Two Centuries in East Texas: A History of San Augustine County and Surrounding Territory* (Dallas: The Southwest Press, 1932), pp. 132-48.

[12]Morton, Ohland, *Terán and Texas: A Chapter in Texas-Mexican Relations* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1948), pp. 42-82, 95-136.

Bradburn at Anáhuac, near Galveston Bay, intensified uneasy feelings until outraged settlers in the spring of 1832, expelled the military from East Texas.[13] Actually, the disturbance at Anáhuac was a chapter in a wider struggle of federalism versus centralism which plagued the internal politics of Mexico City. In 1832, Antonio López de Santa Anna, posing as a champion of liberalism and defender of the Constitution of 1824, ousted the centralist usurper, Anastacio Bustamante, from the presidential palace and installed the candidate who had been deprived of high office in the previous election.[14] At Anáhuac, the Anglo-Texans who opposed Bradburn, a Bustamantista, formed a company styled as the Santa Anna Guards,[15] thus signifying their support of the liberal cause which Don Antonio espoused.

The disturbances of 1832 prompted national authorities to focus renewed attention on Texas. Another inspection, this time by a bilingualist, Juan N. Almonte, assured the settlers of Mexico City's political stability and provided the government with reliable first-hand information about frontier conditions. By 1834, government had placated anxieties of Anglo colonists sufficiently to convince him of their continued loyalty to Mexican institutions. For instance, the legislature created two additional departments, Brazos and Nacogdoches, with jurisdiction over smaller communities.[16] Assuredly, after a decade of colonization, the Mexican legacy to place-name geography was impressive. First, the department of Béxar embraced four municipalities, San Antonio de Béxar, Victoria, Goliad, and San Patricio, with an aggregate population of four thousand souls. Next, the department of the Brazos comprised nine towns, San Felipe, Columbia, Matagorda, Gonzáles, Mina, Brazoria, Harrisburg, Velasco, and Bolivar, with an approximate population of eight thousand inhabitants. Finally, the department of Nacogdoches, with a combined population of nine thousand, included the four municipalities of Nacogdoches, San Augustine, Libertad, and

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[13]Fehrenbach, T. R., *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (New York:: The Macmillan Co., 1968), pp. 170-73.

[14]Colcott, Santa Anna: *The Story of an Enigma Who Once Was Mexico* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), pp. 85-59.

[15]*A Visit To Texas: Being the Journal of a Traveller Through Those Parts Most Interesting to American Settlers* (New York: Goodrich & Wiley, 1934; reprinted in Austin: The Steck Company, 1952), pp. 261-62.

[16]Schmidt, Charles F., *History of Washington County* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1949), p. 7.

Johnsburg, and the four *villas* of Anáhuac, Bevil, Terán, and Tenaha.[17]

Illustrative of Anglo acceptance of Mexican institutions and customs was Stephen Austin's community of San Felipe. In 1823, when he obtained his first land grant, Austin deferred to Luciano Garcia the privilege of suggesting a name for the town which Austin planned to establish. San Felipe, being Garcia's patron saint, became the ecclesiastical phase of the name, and, in recognition of Don Esteban's work, de Austin formed the secular aspect.[18] In political affairs, the inauguration of an *ayuntamiento* or town council in San Felipe was another manifestation of Austin's willingness to conform to Mexican legal traditions and practices. For example, the ayuntamiento, in compliance with national policy, made a commendable effort, between 1828 and 1832, to improve sanitary conditions, to compile a register of births, marriages, and deaths, and to regulate the medical profession,[19] all of which indicated the Mexican reformers were genuinely concerned with the public welfare. In fulfillment of the regulation governing the practice of medicine and the dispensing of drugs, the ayuntamiento of San Felipe

> *ordered the . . . articles (to) be translated and posted in public places with a notice to those concerned in the municipality to present themselves to the ayuntamiento with their diplomas, etc. in order that the said physicians may practice their profession with the necessary license, and that those who do not possess diplomas may not deceive the public nor be permitted to practice a profession which they have neither knowledge nor other necessary requisites for practicing. . . .*[20]

In nearby Atascosito, an unidentified visitor from the United States in 1831 observed the voting habits of the settlers.

> *An election was held there about the time of our visit*

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[17]Vigness, *Revolutionary Decades*, pp. 139-40.

[18]Wharton, *Isle of Mal Hado*, p. 178.

[19]Red, George Plunkett, *The Medicine Man in Texas* (Houston: Standard Printing & Lithographing Co., 1930), p. 29.

[20]Minutes of the Ayuntamineto of San Felipe de Austin, March 2, 1829, quoted in Ibid., p. 31.

> *to Anahuac, at which settlers from a great extent of the surrounding country assembled, all, or nearly all North Americans. It was held on the Sabbath, according to the common custom in Mexico; the polls were opened in Spanish and English, and tellers having been appointed, voting went on. . . .*[21]

The incorporation of some Mexican customs by Austin and the ayuntamiento of San Felipe notwithstanding, the Tejano society remained relatively isolated. That same visitor noticed a Mexican family gathering at San Felipe and commented caustically:

> *A few native Mexicans are settled in this part of the province, and I witnessed one afternoon a Spanish fandango danced in the open air by a party of these people, evidently of a low class. There was nothing worthy of particular remark in the style of the performance; and the music, which was that of violin, was poor indeed. A billiard table . . . (was) publicly kept in the place, and found players even among such a limited population.*[22]

What San Felipe lacked in terms of Mexican settlers, the colony of Martín de León, located in the watershed of the Guadalupe and Lavaca rivers, showed a definite shift in cultural patterns. A French writer, commenting on events of the late 1830's, described one of the principal towns in the De León grant.

> *The city of Goliad, built just thirty miles from the mouth of the San Antonio (River), is in about the same situation as Bexar. It is also a city of Spanish origin and one of the outlets for trade between Texas and the United States on the one hand and Mexico on the other. Goliad used to have the name of Bahia. Its population like that of Bexar, is largely Mexican.*[23]

An explanation why De León succeeded as a Mexican colonizer, apart from determination and initiative, was that as a native-

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[21] *A Visit To Texas*, p. 116.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[23] Maissin, Eugene, *The French in Mexico and Texas (1838-1839)*, trans. *by James L. Shepherd, III* (Salaco: The Anson Jones Press, 1961), p. 191.

born citizen he enjoyed certain advantages under the colonization decrees, one of which permitted Mejicanos to settle on lands near the Gulf coast or the international boundary. De León, well acquainted with conditions in Texas since the Hispanic period when he established a ranch on the east bank of the Rio Aransas, obtained permission in 1824 to introduce forty-one families along the coastal plains. The civil settlement which he founded, in accordance with the stipulations of the land grant, was Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Jesús Victoria in honor of President Guadalupe Victoria. Through popular usage, however, Tejanos conveniently shortened the name to Victoria, thus making another contribution to place-name geography. After completing the first contract, De León, in 1829, secured a second concession to settle 150 additional families on vacant lands adjacent to the initial grant in the Guadalupe-Lavaca watershed. Regrettably, he did not live to see the termination of the project. In 1833, Martín de León, at the age of sixty-eight, died, a victim of the cholera which claimed the lives of many Texans including Governor Veramendi, his daughter Ursula, wife of James Bowie, and her two children.[24] As a tribute to De León's colonization efforts, a modern source assessed his work in the following words:

> *Of the minor impresarios (sic), only the tall, fair complexioned De Leon fulfilled his contract completely. During his lifetime, De Leon's town of Victoria was unique among the Texas colonies. Unlike the Spanish colonial settlements of San Antonio, La Bahia and others, Victoria was truly a Mexican town with Mexican customs and institutions. However, the Victoria colony was the first in Texas to oppose Santa Anna's tyranny.*[25]

In the War for Texan Independence the military confrontations, possibly because of inherent dramatic factors and the rapid emergence of colorful leaders, have dominated much of the history of Texas. All too often, Texana specialists have interpreted the war as the defeat of a culturally inferior people

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[24]Ryan, W. M., *Shamrock and Cactus: The Story of the Catholic Heroes of Texas Independence* (San Antonio and Houston: Southern Literary Institute, 1936), p. 15; Vigness, *Revolutionary Decades*, pp. 70-71.

[25]San Antonio *Light*, August 31, 1969.

by a culturally superior class of Anglo frontiersmen, ignoring altogether the fact that a sizeable number of Mexican Tejanos actively supported the federalist cause and ultimately the independence movement.

At the outbreak of hostilities in the autumn of 1835, Plácido Benavides, followed by thirty Mexican riders from Victoria, joined Anglo volunteers in the siege of San Antonio. From the latter community came Juan Seguín with twenty-two of his *vecinos*.[26] In the actual storming of Béxar, another Mexican, Jesús Cuellar, otherwise known as Comanche because of his close affinity to the Indians of that tribe, defected from the centralist side and guided the Texan forces into the town.[27] A young German participant in the battle reminisced:

> *As we were struggling among the perplexities of such a cheerless and baffling situation, the arrival in camp (Salado Creek) of five Mexican riders gave a new turn to our affairs. The leader of the party was a small, slender man, wearing the uniform of a Mexican lieutenant' . . .A white flag fluttered in his left hand. After the usual preliminaries in such cases, he hurriedly asked for our commanding officer. We took him to the latter (Edward Burleson), to whom he declared that he could manage to bring our troops close to the center of the city without anyone's noticing their presence. He even added that if a few of our men would follow him, he could slip undetected beneath the very windows of General Cos's residence.*[28]

After a successful campaign, for services rendered, the Provisional Government of Texas conferred on Cuellar the rank of captain, a grade also tendered to Seguín, in the Legion of Cavalry.[29]

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[26]House, Boyce, *San Antonio: City of Flaming Adventure* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1968), p. 44; Ryan, *Shamrock and Cactus*, p. 43.

[27]Davenport, Harbert, "Captain Jesus Cuellar, Texas' Cavalry, Otherwise 'Comanche,'" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXX, No. 1 (July, 1926), p. 56.

[28]Ehrenberg, Herman, *With Milam and Fannin: Adventures of a German Boy in Texas's Revolution*, trans. by Charlott Churchill and ed. by Henry Smith (Austin: The Pemberton Press, 1968), p. 67.

[29]Davenport, "Captain Jesus Cuellar," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXX, pp. 58-59.

At the battle of the Alamo, the ten Tejanos who died in the mission-fortress, among whom were Gregorio Esparza, Juan Antonio Badilla, and Antonio Fuentes, gave indisputable testimony of their commitment to the Texan provincial cause.[30] Likewise, on the field of San Jacinto, Captain Seguín, ably assisted by his lieutenants Antonio Menchaca, Ambrosio Rodriguez, and Manuel Flores, led the cavalry charge.[31] Sam Houston, later as President of the Republic of Texas, praised Seguín's support at San Jacinto:

> *. . . Col. John N. Seguin, an officer in our service. . . . commanded the only Mexican company who fought in the cause of Texas at the Battle of San Jacinto. His chivalrous and estimable conduct in the battle won for him my warmest regard and esteem, . . .*[32]

Interestingly, while not all Tejanos fought in the Texas armies, not all Anglo-Americans took up arms in the defense of their homes either. One such early pioneer of the coastal area was Solomon Barrow who, although friendly and helpful to the Texans, refused to fight Santa Anna's army. Insisting that he had enjoyed years of peace under Mexican law and that it was from that government that he had acquired good land at reasonable rates, Barrow, on the day of the historic battle of San Jacinto, climbed Tory Hill from where he watched the outcome of the fighting.[33]

As the military phases of the Texan revolution unfolded, political leaders, with or without ideas, gathered at Goliad and, on December 20, 1835, issued a premature declaration of independence. Among the Tejanos who signed the Goliad document, drafted by Ira Ingram, were Miguel Aldrete and Manuel Carbajal.[34] Still later, at Washington-on-the-Brazos, other lead-

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[30]Almaráz, "Historical Origin of the Mexican-American in Texas," p. 3.

[31]Menchaca, *Memoirs*, pp. 23-24; House, *San Antonio*, p. 72.

[32]Sam Houston to E. D. White, Governor of Louisiana, Houston, October 31, 1837, in Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker (eds.), *The Writings of Sam Houston, 1813-1863* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1939), II, p. 147.

[33]Varuna Hartmann Lawrence (comp.), *Texas Coastal Pioneers of Chambers County* (Dallas: Royal Publishing Company, 1952), pp. 26-27.

[34]Ryan, *Shamrock and Cactus*, pp. 31-32.

ers, including José Antonio Navarro, José Francisco Ruíz, and Lorenzo de Zavala, convened and proclaimed the official declaration.[35] Of the three Mexican Texans, De Zavala was the most energetic participant, and, for his work, the members of the Convention of 1836 selected him Ad Interim Vice President of the Republic of Texas.[36] The other two, Ruíz and his nephew, Navarro, were well-known San Antonio politicians[37] and subsequently served with distinction in the legislative branch of the new government.[38] Navarro's legacy to place-name geography is in the East Texas county, organized in 1846, which bears the family name. In fact Navarro himself, in memory of the European birthplace of his father, designated Corsicana as the county seat.

For most Tejanos, the wartime experience of 1836 formed an almost impregnable barrier through which nothing of a complimentary nature about their culture could emerge. Year by year they found themselves overwhelmed by an alien society which overlooked their contributions to state history. Moreover, the Mexican War of 1846-1848 and the border raids from both sides of the Rio Grande drastically hindered the process of achieving an understanding and an accommodation of the Mexican American in the larger framework of the Texas story.

As a result of animosities which armed conflicts generated, the Mexican American in 19th Century Texas became a stranger in the land which he once claimed as his own. The role that he played in three important events in the second half of the century, the development of the ranching industry in South Texas, participation in the Confederate and Union armies, and the economic build-up of the Rio Grande Frontier, is an area requiring extensive research and intensive review. Fortunately, the recent attitudinal changes at regional and national levels have made such an endeavor a legitimate academic activity.

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[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

[36] Webb, Walter Prescott (ed.), *The Handbook of Texas* (2 vols.; Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952).

[37] Rodríguez, J. M., *Rodriguez Memoirs of Early Texas* (San Antonio: Standard Printing Co., 1961), p. 71.

[38] Ryan, *Shamrock and Cactus*, pp. 34-35.

[39] Jones, William Moses (comp.), *Texas History Carved in Stone* (Houston: Monument Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 60-61.

THE MIGRANT WORKER AND THE BRACERO IN THE U.S.

By
CHARLES FRAZIER

The wartime manpower shortage resulted in the first Mexican nationals arriving on the farms of the United States to provide the needed farm labor. These workers were called braceros, which means "persons who work with their arms." The "wetbacks," who were illegal immigrants from Mexico to the United States, were used whenever possible prior to World War II.

The initial agreement was made in late 1942 between the governments of Mexico and the United States to bring the Mexican nationals to work on United States' farms during the peak seasons of the harvests. These Mexican nationals endured certain abuses during the post war period due to irregularities in the bracero program. These irregularities resulted in the government of Mexico urging the United States government to enact and enforce laws which would protect the bracero.[1]

A commission to study the problem of migrant labor was appointed by President Harry Truman, yet, pressures were building up for more cheap labor due to the "police action" of the United States in Korea. The Eighty-second Congress, on July 12, 1951, following the completion of the report of the Truman Commission, enacted Public Law No. 78, which codified the bracero program. Then in 1952, the MacCarran-Walter Act, passed as Public Law No. 414, was a new immigration and naturalization act, which permitted the temporary importation of foreign labor under contracts for periods up to three years.[2]

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[1]Hancock, Richard H., *The Role of the Bracero in the Economic and Cultural Dynamics* (California: Hispanic American Society, 1959), p. 46.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 47.

It should be remembered that the importation of Mexican nationals was not the first attempt of the United States agriculturists to use foreign labor. Ninety per cent of the field labor in 1880 was done by Chinese nationals.[3] Two years later, the Chinese Exclusion Act passed because of the efforts of organized labor. Japanese have also been utilized on farms in the United States. There were more than 72,000 on the factory farms of the West by 1910.[4] These Japanese were industrious and shrewd farmers and began to buy and successfully farm their own land. The Alien Land Law passed by the State of California in 1913 stopped this cheap Japanese labor.

Prior to the passage of the 1916 immigration laws, farmers of the United States depended on the yearly supply of European immigrants for temporary and seasonal help. The farmer throughout the western states had a permanent migratory labor force of Chinese, Japaneses, and Hindu immigrants, which emphasizes the fact that agriculture in this country has had a long tradition of imported and subjugated labor. The United States agri-business also has made use of the migrant. These may be described as workers whose principal income is earned from temporary farm employment and who in the course of a year's work moves at least once and often through several states.[5] It is not known how long migratory labor has been used in the United States, but the Industrial Commission reported in 1901 that Negro labor, on the move from the South, was being used in the New England states.[6]

The East Coast migrant stream developed its present pattern by 1920. During the next decade a large segment of the migratory work force was composed of displaced persons from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas. This pleased the large commercial farmers, since they had a shifting labor supply which came when needed and left when the work was completed.[7]

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[3]Moore, Truman, *The Slaves We Rent* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 84.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 83.

[5]Texas State Senate, 55th Legislature, 1st Session, Texas Legislative Council, *Transportation of Migrant Labor in Texas* (Austin: Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 2.

[6]Moore, *The Slaves We Rent*, p. 85.

[7]Allen, Steve, *The Ground Is Our Table* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 54.

During the present decade Texas has become the home base for the largest single group of citizen migrants serving agriculture in the United States. No records are available, but it is estimated that as many as 100,000 leave their homes to do farm work in Texas and other states each year. The Texas Employment Commission and the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that approximately 62,500 Texas migrants left the state to work.[8] Presently, the migrant flow is fed by domestic farm and city workers displaced by the cheaper labor of the blue-card commuters. It would be interesting to know if "Operation Intercept" affected this trend.

Public Law No. 414 made it possible for the blue-carders to come into the United States. These are Mexican nationals who work in the United States, crossing the border each day. The blue visa is good for seventy-two hours.[9] These Mexican nationals usually work for lower wages, and it must be remembered that these blue-carders live in Mexico, where the United States dollar is equivalent to $12.40 Mexican pesos. It is impossible for the United States farm laborer to compete with these foreigners; therefore, the Mexican-American (I hope this is the term presently preferred), who compose the majority of the migrant stream, are displaced and forced to leave the state in order to make a living, heading toward Minnesota, Idaho, Michigan, Wisconsin, and other states. Perhaps this explains why Texas is both the largest user and the largest exporter of migrant labor.[10]

Transportation constantly has been an important factor in the lives of the migrant and the *bracero*. Many tragic and unnecessary accidents involving these two groups have resulted in national attention being focused on the transportation problem. One of these involving migrants occurred on September 18, 1963, when a busload of sixty-three Mexican-American field workers approached a small grade crossing near Chualar, California, about eight miles south of Salinas. The bus was hit by a Southern Pacific freight, consisting of seventy sugar-beet gondola cars. The bus was dragged for approximately one-half mile, re-

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[8]Texas State Senate, p. 3.

[9]Newsweek, "Stooping to Conquer," Vol. 67, February 7, 1966, p. 61.

[10]*Ibid.*, *"Now They Walk With Us,"* Vol. 68, September 12, 1966, p. 54.

sulting in thirty-two migrant deaths.[11] An earlier case involving *braceros* occurred on October 31, 1955, when a cattle truck loaded with eighty-five Mexican *braceros* was traveling toward Del Rio. A seventeen-year old high school boy had driven the truck from Plainview and had driven all night. Later he stated that he went to sleep at the wheel. The truck left the road, straddled a culvert rail, and then plunged down an incline and overturned, pinning most of the *braceros* beneath the truck, fortunately no more than seven were killed, but more than sixty were seriously injured.[12]

Even though the two cases are examples of tragic accidents concerning the transportation of agricultural workers, the similarities end there, since significant differences exist between the transportation of citizen migrants and that of *braceros* brought into the United States to do seasonal farm labor. The United States Department of Labor, at the expense of the Federal Government, was responsible for transporting Mexican contract workers from migratory stations in the interior of Mexico to reception centers in the United States. Under the terms of the *Bracero* program, the employer was required to furnish transportation and subsistence from the reception center to the place of employment, during employment, and from the place of employment back to the reception center. Large numbers of *braceros* had to be transported by rail, chartered bus, or chartered coach airplanes, since they were going great distances such as Utah, Colorado, and Michigan. To assure compliance with the regulations, the Department of Labor representatives required employers or contractors to provide proof of the type of transportation used, proposed routes, time schedules, and stops taken en route. Anyone involved in the transportation of *braceros* had to provide liability insurance. [13]

The native migrant workers' transportation was not regulated by the Federal Government and received little attention until recently. In transportation, as in any aspect of the migrant worker, the crew leader plays an important role. Trucks have usually been owned by the crew leader or by a labor contractor. In most instances, they have not been designed for carrying

[11]Moore, *The Slaves We Rent*," p. 18.

[12]Texas State Senate, p. 1.

[13]*Newsweek*, "As Braceros Leave," Vol. 32, January 28, 1965, pp. 42-45.

passengers. Many of them had no seating facilities, protection from the weather, fire extinguishers, safety glass or other protective and safety devices which are required by Texas law.[14]

On cross-country trips, crew leaders and/or contractors have driven crews long distances without stopping. Many migrants claimed that there were no rest camps or facilities on the route where the migrants could stop to wash, to rest, and to cook. At other times, the trip was made non-stop in order to avoid losing possible dissatisfied workers. Frequently the migrant had to sit on wooden benches or on top of piles of their personal belongings for great distances. The crew leader's control was increased since the domestic migrant seldom was able to finance his own trip. There have been many instances of crew leaders and labor contractors exploiting workers by making indefinite arrangements about charges for transportation and then deducting excessive amounts from their wages when they got settled.[15]

In an attempt to correct the migrant transportation problems, California, New York, Connecticut, Oregon, West Virginia, and Texas enacted laws and regulations to assure safer conditions. In some instances, when the representatives of grower-employers and state agencies brought about these regulations, they were not formally administered or strictly enforced.[16] When the *bracero* program was operative, the *bracero* would receive $3,000 if a fatal accident occurred. The migrant had no protection, and only recently has he had any protection. The Federal Government in 1965 required all crew leaders to carry liability insurance on farm workers while they were on the road.[17]

Even though the migrant is said to traverse the entire United States, few actually realize the extensively long distances these people travel. There are six main streams of migrant flow in the United States, which are: the Atlantic Coast Movement, the

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[14]Texas State Senate, p. 68.

[15]Florida State Department of Education, *Planning Florida's Migrant Education.* (Tallahassee: State Department of Education, 1966), p. 8.

[16]Lebergott, Stanley, *Men Without Work.* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 68.

[17]United States Senate, 90th Congress, 1st Session, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *Migratory Labor Legislation,* Part II. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Press Office, 1968), p. 789.

Eastern Fruit Migration, the Sugar Beet Migration, the Wheat Migration, the Cotton Migration, and the Pacific Coast Movement. The Atlantic Coast Movement is composed principally of Negro families moving northward from Florida, following the coast. The principal work areas are in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. Texas migrants rarely enter this section. The Eastern Fruit Migration, composed of Anglo-American and Mexican-American families from most of the Southern states, includes picking fruits and vegetables in Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and New York. The Sugar Beet Migration is predominantly of Mexican-American families recruited from Texas to thin and harvest sugar beets in Michigan, Nebraska, Colorado, Idaho, and Montana. The Wheat Migration begins in Texas and ends in North Dakota. The Cotton Migration is mainly within Texas, Arizona, and California. The Pacific Coast Movement is composed of Anglo-American and Mexican-American families shifting from one crop to another in California and in the Northwest. Many of these migrants come from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.[18]

Wages, farmers, farm laborers, and unions have had little meaning. The *bracero* was assured, under international agreement, $1.00 an hour and work for at least three-fourths of his contract. If he worked on a piece-rate basis and the crop was good, the farmer stood to gain. If the crop was poor, the *bracero* was still assured of his hourly wages. The migrant worker, not covered by a minimum wage law, was paid on a piece-rate basis, which made it difficult for the migrant to compete with the wages which the *bracero* was willing to accept. Mr. W. Willard Wirtz, Secretary of Labor, placed new wages and restrictions on the *bracero* program in January 1965. Several regulations limited the number of *braceros* who could be imported; another was that farmers had to offer to pay $1.40 an hour before they could import *braceros;* another stated that the farmers earnestly had to attempt to recruit domestic workers at wage levels stipulated by the Secretary of Labor. The farmers viewed this action by Mr. Wirtz as outrageous, but it was a giant step forward for the migrant farm worker. However, the Secretary of Labor provided a loop-hole, since one condition provided that farmers

[18]Texas State Senate, p. 11.

who did not import *braceros* did not have to comply with the minimum wage regulations.[19]

The amended Fair Labor Standards Act of 1966 assured the farm workers of a minimum of $1.14 an hour, while the minimum wage for the migrant farm worker was set at $1.00 an hour in February 1967, and raised to $1.15 in February 1968.[20] Numerous exceptions and exclusions in the Fair Labor Standards Act severely limited general application of the minimum wage for farm work. Only about 390,000 of 1.4 million hired farm workers are covered under this Act.[21] In spite of recent improvements in farm rates, the farm worker still is on the bottom rung of the economic ladder.

Although hourly wages increased from $1.14 an hour in 1966 to $1.33 an hour in 1967, there are still many states with average wages at or below $1.00. Farm workers rank lowest in annual income of all occupational groups. An underpaid laundry worker makes on the average of forty cents an hour more than farm workers.[22] Consistently, when wages were raised, the farmer claimed that the consumer would be the scapegoat. In reality, the cost of field labor is only a minute part of the retail price paid by the consumer. On a head of lettuce which retailed at twenty-one cents, the field labor cost was from .01 to .03 cents. A pound of celery retailing at .155 cents cost six-tenths of one cent or one cent for the field labor.[23] This should have little, if any impact on the consumer cost.

The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 extended the right to bargain collectively to many industries, but the agriculture industry was excluded. The Act guaranteed federally supervised democratic union representation elections, protected against unfair labor practices, and defended and protected the right of employers and employees. The farmers do not desire to be covered under this Act. So far, their dealing with "perishable goods" has exempted them. Even though unions have helped the migrant

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[19] *U. S. News and World Report*, "Job Problems for Two Counties," Vol. 58, January 18, 1965, p. 74.

[20] United States Senate, 90th Congress, 2nd Session, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *The Migratory Farm Labor Problem in the United States*, Senate Report 1006 (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1968).

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

[23] United States Senate, *Migratory Labor Legislation*, p. 778.

worker, he had been somewhat reluctant to support fully the unions. Farm workers and union organizers have made allegations of continual harrassment, physical violence, and brutality when attempts were made to form unions. Many labor disputes throughout the United States have made evident the lack of Federal legislation concerning the farm worker. La Casita Farms of Rio Grande City, Texas, Hines Wholesale Incorporation of California, and Tucson Newspapers, Incorporated of Arizona, have been sites of labor disputes which have indicated the need for Federal legislation of fair labor practices for the migrant worker.[24]

Public Law No. 78 stipulated that adequate housing be provided for contracted *braceros*. A Raymondville ginner adequately met the requirements by pitching up old Army surplus tents to house 1,300 *braceros*. There was no running water in the camp, and four old-time "privies" were erected in order to comply with the sanitary requirements demanded by international agreement.[25] Some farmers did provide barracks which were within approved health limits. When barracks were provided, there were usually adequate toilet, bathing, and laundry facilities. It was the duty of the Federal Security Council, according of Public Law No. 78, to inspect, approve, and supervise the housing conditions of the *bracero*. Due to the large number of *braceros* employed and the large area within which they were distributed, the Council had a difficult time enforcing the regulations which provided for their welfare. Few labor camps of *braceros* were ever closed down due to lack of adequate housing and other facilities.[26]

The migrant worker, unlike the *bracero*, had no one, not even his government, to protect him. Housing for the migrant has been different, since he travels with his entire family. President Johnson's Commission on Rural Poverty Report of 1965 emphasized the necessity for housing improvements: "Decent housing is an urgent need of the migrant. They live in dilapidated, drafty, ramshackle houses that are cold and wet in winter, leaky and steaming in the summer. Running water, inside toilets, and screened windows are the exception rather than the rule." The

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[24]*Corpus Christi Caller*, Corpus Christi, Texas, July 5, 1966, p. 1.

[25]*Ibid.*,

[26]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

typical "homes" in which migrants live are usually: (1) lacking in adequate facilities for food storage and preparation, (2) lacking adequate sewage and waste disposal facilities, (3) lacking in livable space and construction, and (4) lacking in adequate and safe water supply for drinking, dishwashing, bathing and laundry.[27]

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Economic Development Administration, and the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Community Development Service, all administer programs which may help the housing problem of the migrant. Although funds from these agencies have been available for many years, farmers and farm associations have been reluctant to build housing for migratory workers with the aid of these funds. Moreover, they are reluctant to build housing and maintain it in good condition, since it will be vacant much of the year. Many farmers claim that there are numerous delays and red tape involved in obtaining funds under any of these agencies. There is also overlapping of jurisdiction between the various agencies, and with authority divided, there is always the danger that none of the departments will adequately fund a program.[28]

Many of the problems concerning the migrant farm worker are still with us, which is not true of the *bracero*. However, the *bracero* did play a unique role in the United States' migratory labor force. Prior to 1930, wetbacks, persons who entered illegally, usually came to the United States to escape turmoil and the uncertainties of revolution occurring in Mexico. Many of these wetbacks returned to their homeland between 1932 and 1940, since the depression resulted in hoards of unemployed. But, World War II created a labor shortage, resulting in the *bracero* under the provision of Public Law #78. The *bracero* outnumbered the wetbacks between 1943-1945, but the situation reversed itself between 1946-1954.[29] The United States

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[27]United States Senate, *Migratory Labor Legislation*, p. 797.

[28]United States Senate, *The Migratory Farm Labor Problem in the United States*, p. 31.

[29]Because Congress let the program lapse, the individual farmer had to make his own contracts. Since this was not acceptable to the bracero or the Mexican Government, the number of braceros entering the United States dropped from 60,000 to 20,000. To fill the shortage of labor, the wetbacks began pouring into this country again. *Newsweek*, "Stooping to Conquer," February 7, 1966, p. 66.

Immigration Service had initiated its "Operation Wetback" in 1954, in an endeavor to prevent the illegal entries. Approximately 450,000 *braceros* entered the United States annually after 1954, while there were 274,893 Mexican nationals who entered under permanent visas.[30]

Not only did the farmer of the United States gain because of the *bracero*, but Mexico also benefited directly from the system, since it furnished employment where it was needed the most, among the lowest economic groups. Consumer purchasing power of the *bracero* rose, but more important the system brought dollars to the poor areas of Mexico where the United States tourists never ventured.

For several years from five to fifteen per cent of Mexico's entire economically active population sought seasonal employment either as wetbacks or as *braceros*,[31] which brought additional money into Mexico. The income of the *braceros* brought a dollar volume ranked third behind the United States tourist business and agricultural products such as cotton and coffee and minerals such as lead, copper, and zinc. *One bracero* camp of 1,700 in Fullerton, California, sent $316,000 home during a three month period in 1956.[32] *Braceros*, as early as 1952, had sent home approximately seventy million dollars, and the wetbacks sent another million dollars into Mexico. The total remittances were approximately $120,000,000 annually for 1956 and 1957.[33]

Opponents of the system claimed that the *bracero* displaced United States' citizens and forced or held wages down. But, according to a Department of State Bulletin, year round employment was not disturbed, and wages did not appear to be directly affected.[34] Instead, the *bracero* filled a void resulting from the diminishing numbers of migratory farm laborers.

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[30]Hancock, *The Role of the Bracero*, p. 17.

[31]Ibid., p. 1.

[32]Eldridge, Fred, *Saturday Evening Post*, "Helping Hands from Mexico," August 10, 1957, p. 63.

[33]Hancock, *The Role of the Bracero*, p. 2.

[34]*United States State Department Bulletin*, "United States-Mexican Agreement in Farm Labor," March 29, 1954, p. 467. "Wages paid to Mexican workers . . . may not be less than prevailing wages for domestic laborers performing the same activity in the same area of employment as determind by the United States Secretary of Labor."

Nevertheless, Secretary of Labor Wirtz virtually ended the *bracero* program in 1965; a program which apparently benefited certain sectors of the population in both Mexico and the United States. The migrant worker is still with us, and such a simple solution to his problem is not presently available. Only the future will unfold his fate.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN LAND ISSUES

IN THE

UNITED STATES

By
JOHN H. MCNEELY

Mexican-American land issues in the United States must begin necessarily when Anglo-American acquired political control over parts of Northern Mexico as a result of the Texas Revolution, the War with Mexico, and the Gadsden Purchase. Some Mexicans, passing under the new jurisdiction, or if they departed claiming titles to land, found it difficult to defend their property rights. Discouraged, they may have put up little effort to defend them.

It should be made clear, however, that in colonial times under the Crown of Castile, there was confusion and difficulty over land grants which became more widespread under the lax colonization policies adopted after Mexico became independent. When the United States took over parts of Mexico, therefore, it inherited a considerable land problem. Under Article 8 of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, proclaimed by President Polk on July 4, 1848, Mexican citizens residing in territories ceded to the United States were given a period of one year to decide whether they wanted to become U. S. citizens or remain citizens of Mexico. Their property rights were to remain inviolable regardless of their decision.

This paper will discuss the land problem in three of the Southwestern States erected from former Mexican territories: Texas, California, and New Mexico. The situation in Texas was unique since its de facto independence was established by the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. The Spanish-speaking settlers of Texas, headed by Lorenzo de Zavala, generally supported movement for Texas independence and so were not disturbed in their land holdings. They formed less than 10% of the total population. Emigration from Mexico during the Republic of Texas must

have about ceased, while Anglo-American colonization continued at a rapid pace.

The Republic claimed the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, but exercised no control there. The settlements dated back to colonial times, beginning in 1749 under José de Escandôn, and became an integral part of the State of Tamaulipas. The claim of Texas to the Rio Grande boundary was recognized by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, however, and the same month that the treaty was signed (February, 1848), the Texas Legislature created three new counties for the region: Webb, Starr, and Cameron. Zapata County was created in 1851 and Hidalgo County in 1852. The new county officials for many years were mostly Anglo-Americans which must have placed the descendants of the old Spanish grantees at some disadvantage.

The Texas legislature in 1850 authorized the so-called Bourland-Miller Commission to investigate and make recommendations about all Spanish and Mexican land grants Southwest of the Nueces River. In 1852, the legislature validated most of the original Spanish porciones in the Lower Valley. Further legislation between 1860 and 1871, gave legal jurisdiction to the State courts to determine early land claims and disputes.

Since Texas retained its public lands and land jurisdiction when it entered the Union as a State, no Spanish or Mexican titles had legal validity unless approved by the Texas legislature and patented by the General Land Office of Texas. This was true of the Ponce de Leon grant made in 1827 by the State of Chihuahua to what is now downtown El Paso. After Ponce's death in 1852 and after his heirs had sold out to an Anglo-American, the legislature established in 1854 the Taylor-Lane Commission to examine Spanish and Mexican land titles in West Texas. This Rio Grande Commission recommended confirmation of the Ponce grant, but it was not until 1858 that Governor Runnels finally signed an act by which the State of Texas relinquished to Juan Maria Ponce de Leon and his heirs and assigns all claims to the Ponce grant.

Generally speaking, it was remarkable how many Spanish and Mexican land grants were upheld in the border area of Texas, especially the Lower Valley. On the other hand, it must have often been done with the help of Anglo-American lawyers and politicians, or where such claims had been sold in whole

or in part to Anglo-Americans. This statement can also be applied to the other regions ceded by Mexico to the United States.

The condition of California was more complicated than in Texas. The colonial settlement of California by the Spaniards did not begin until 1769, but it resulted in the founding of military posts, Indian missions, civilian towns, and a few private ranches. After independence and between the Mexican Colonization law of 1824 and the American invasion of 1846, about 800 land grants were made. From 1834 to 1840, the missions were secularized and their surplus lands disposed of.

While Upper California was part of Mexico, the national authority was very weak. In the years 1831 to 1845, the rebellious local population deposed four of the territorial governors sent out by Mexico City. Americans and other foreigners began to move in and easily secured land grants from the local politicians. With the War between Mexico and the United States, there began a heavy influx of Anglo-Americans who believed that by "manifest destiny" everything in California belonged by right to the citizens of the conquering nation. The newcomers were angry to find that much of the best land was claimed and occupied by Mexican grantees.

When California entered the Union as a State in 1850, those in political control thought that California ought to have the same dominion over its lands as was enjoyed by Texas. Already in 1849, Captain Henry W. Halleck had made a detailed study of California land grants in which he advised that the United States ought to proceed with caution. He had found that in many titles the boundaries were not clearly defined, in others the legal procedure for possession had never been completed, and some grants had been antedated which would seem to make them fraudulent.

Instead of immediately confirming all claims, Congress passed the California Land Act of March 3, 1851, which provided for the President to appoint a body of three commissioners. All those in California with Spanish or Mexican land claims were required to present their documents and witnesses before this Board of Land Commissioners within two years. Its decisions could be appealed up through the Federal Courts. The Surveyor General of California would survey all confirmed grants and the U. S. General Land Office would issue patents. Rejected claims became part of the public domain.

Altogether, 813 claims were brought before this commission and most of them were upheld. About two-thirds were appealed to the Federal Courts, where the District Court was more favorable to the claimants than the Board had been. Heavy pressure developed during the proceedings. Newly arrived settlers were against everything Mexican. They attacked the land grants as fraudulent and gave trouble as squatters. The Gold Rush to California made a bad situation worse. Undesirable elements engaged in riots and vigilante tactics. In California, as in Texas, it is remarkable how many of the Mexican claims were respected though some claimants must have impoverished themselves in prolonged litigation. Most of the first Mexicans, who chose also to be Americans, must have found themselves in the character of underdogs.

The situation in New Mexico presents still a different picture, because New Mexico, created a territory in 1850, remained under federal jurisdiction until 1912. The Spanish occupation of New Mexico dated back to 1598. Under Spanish law, colonial officials could grant land, but title had to be confirmed by the King of Spain. The great distance between New Mexico and Spain, the inefficiency in administration under weak monarchs led to uncertainty and difficulty over land titles. The land grant problem became more serious under Mexican rule and after New Mexico was annexed by the United States.

Having inherited a ready-made land grant problem, the United States did nothing about it until July 22, 1854, when Congress established the position of Surveyor General for New Mexico. This official was to make reports to the Secretary of Interior as to the validity of all land grant claims, who in turn would submit the reports to Congress.

The office of the various Surveyors General was soon flooded with land claims beyond the facilities to deal with them. A few claims, with important political backing, were confirmed by Congress, but the majority were ignored and forgotten. In the period from 1854 to 1870, the Congress confirmed 62 Spanish or Mexican land grants in New Mexico. Then in 1870, Congress ceased to act at all on any New Mexico land claims. During the wait of long years, many claimants died, and their descendants often sold their rights for a fraction of their value.

The condition of the grant lands and their claimants became deplorable.

Every territorial governor of New Mexico from 1856 to 1889, in official reports and otherwise, complained about the chaotic condition of land grant titles. They told how titles had become more complicated from year to year and were in much worse shape than at the time of annexation. Boundaries had been enlarged and overlapped. Systematic manufacturing of fraudulent titles had taken place. Many claimants did nothing to improve or pay taxes on their lands since their titles were in doubt. The economic progress of the Territory was seriously retarded by this problem.

Finally on March 3, 1891, President Harrison signed "An Act to Establish a Court of Private Land Claims," which was set up at Denver, Colorado, on July 1, 1891. It was this court which brought some order out of the chaos. However, litigation and repercussions were necessarily prolonged.

A most striking example of the conflict and bitterness resulting from the land problems in New Mexico is found in the history of the famous Maxwell Land Grant. It dates back to the time when New Mexico was still under Mexican jurisdiction, and foreigners began arriving over the Santa Fe Trail. One of those who became influential was Charles Beaubien, a native of Canada, who settled in New Mexico during the 1820's and assumed Mexican citizenship.

In January 1841, Manuel Armijo, the Mexican Territorial Governor of New Mexico, confirmed a grant of land to Guadalupe Miranda and Carlos Beaubien to an area East of the municipality of Taos. In their petition for the grant, Miranda and Beaubien said that the population of New Mexico was largely idle and vicious, "the towns overrun with thieves and murderers." They considered it difficult to reform the current generation, but expressed hope for the children. They proposed to raise sugar beets on their grant, as well as livestock, and eventually to establish the manufacture of cotton and wool.

During 1843, the Justice of Taos, Cornelio Vigil, surveyed and marked the boundaries of the grant east of Taos. At some point in that period, Miranda and Beaubien took as an associate in their enterprise an American named Charles Bent. These three men encountered intense opposition to their plans from Father Antonio Jose Martinez, the Curate of Taos, who had

always opposed large grants to the well-to-do in favor of small grants to the poor.

Father Martinez contended in documents which he filed in Santa Fe that the lands given to Miranda, Beaubien, and Bent belonged to the people of Taos and other municipalities who had used them for generations as commons to graze their cattle. Settlers moving out from Taos and other towns had established ranches on the Cimarron, Rayado and other streams. Some had, in fact, gone East as far as the Llano Estacado where they raised sheep (Pastores) or traded with the Indians (Comancheros).

The struggle came to a head after U. S. troops occupied New Mexico in 1846, and Charles Bent was appointed American civil governor. The citizens of Taos became more and more defiant. In January 1847, Governor Bent went to Taos accompanied by a group of supporters, including Narciso Beaubien, only son of Charles Beaubien. In the uprising that followed Governor Bent and his friends were killed by the mob.

The death of Narciso Beaubien brought to the fore Lucien Maxwell, a native of Illinois, who in 1844 had married Luz Beaubien, daughter and heiress of Charles. Maxwell gradually took over the management of the Beaubien affairs. In 1857, the Surveyor General of New Mexico upheld the original Miranda-Beaubien grant and in 1860, Congress confirmed it. The death of Charles Beaubien took place during 1864. Between 1858 and 1868, Maxwell bought out the interests of Guadalupe Miranda in the land grant, it is said for less than $3,000. While in 1865, he bought out the heirs of Charles Bent for $8,000.

Meanwhile, Maxwell had been proceeding with the development of his property. Those who opposed him claimed that through distorting the description of the original boundaries, through political influence, and the surveying practices of the time, the grant was vastly enlarged from about 32,000 acres to over 1,700,000 acres. In 1870, after the discovery of gold in the Moreno Valley of the grant, Lucien Maxwell and his wife sold out to British speculators, organized as the Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Co., for $1,350,000. Within ten years this company got into financial difficulties and in turn was sold for $2,000,000 to a group of Dutch capitalists, set up as the Maxwell Land Grant Co.

During all these years the United States government, which was the only authority in the territory, seemed disinterested in

the expansions of the grant which infringed on the public domain, on the lands of the Jicarillo Apaches, as well as the rights of Spanish-American and Anglo-American settlers. Violence occurred, with murders and vigilante actions. Finally in 1882, the federal government aroused itself enough to bring suit in courts, alleging that the surveyors of the Maxwell Grant had "falsely, fraudulently, and deceitfully" drawn the boundaries so as to include large areas not part of the original grant. Carried all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court, a judgment was given in 1887 that simply upheld the entire grant on the basis of the Act of Congress in 1860 which had confirmed the original grant.

The conflict over the Maxwell property and the many cases handled by the Court of Private Land Claims, set up in Denver during 1891, form the background for the racial tensions that exist in New Mexico today. To the West of Texas, for example, is found Rio Arriba County, present population about 25,000. Of those 20,000 are Spanish-Americans, which is the preferred expression in New Mexico. The county has about 11,000 people on welfare.

In Rio Arriba County, Anglo-Americans wrested titles to land from original owners by taxation, theft, and fraud, as well as legal purchase, and they now own the major farms and ranches. Spanish-Americans who still own small plots are discouraged from grazing their cattle in the National Forests which cover large parts of the county, having been erected, of course, from the public domain.

There came to Rio Arriba during 1962, one Reies López Tijerina. About 35 years old at that time, he had been born in Texas, where he was a migrant cotton picker and then a guitar-playing Pentacostal minister. Tijerina organized the Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants) to promote the "Free City State of San Joaquin," later called the "Federal Alliance of Free City States."

By 1966, the Alliance claimed to have 14,000 members and was collecting $1 per month from 3,000 families. Tijerina opened an office in Albuquerque from which Alianza members were solicited to contribute $100 each to finance court action against the states of New Mexico, California, and Texas, as well as the federal government, to recover 35,000,000 acres of land said to

belong rightly to towns and villages originally set up under Spanish and Mexican rule.

The legal and theoretical bases for Tijerina's contentions are undoubtedly varied. To begin with, the Alianza likes to call attention to a Papal Bull of Pope Alexander VI in 1493, later incorporated into Spanish law, which provided that lands granted to settlers in the New World should remain entailed perpetually to their heirs and were never to be alienated. It is true that there were large estates that passed by primogeniture (mayorazgos) in colonial Spanish American, but these feudal arrangements were abandoned after independence, and property has been freely bought, sold, and taxed for a long time.

A second basis for Alianza claims is the old Spanish practice, when municipalities were founded, of giving them communal lands. There were three categories of such lands. First, the fundo legal or town site was usually larger than the area occupied by the houses, so the surplus was held by the commune. Second were the propios whose produce was originally used for the support of the municipality. Third were the ejidos or commons, generally employed by the vecinos or citizens for grazing lands. The cabildos, or town councils, held such parcels as corporations. They may have been intended in colonial times to give some protection, especially to Indian villages, from the big land owners.

Tijerina says that he spent a period of his life from 1957 to 1961 studying in Mexico and researching old documents. In any case, he must be familiar with the tremendous agrarian reforms in Mexico under the Constitution of 1917, by which thousands of campesinos have received inalienable parcels under the modern revival of the ejidos. Tijerina's use of the expression "Free City State" suggests a third theoretical basis for his program in the "municipio Libre," another ideal of the Mexican Revolution. Under the free city concept, there is supposed to be vigorous, local, self-government at its best. For the working out of this principle in Mexico, at least, the municipalities are not permitted even to work out their own budget without the permission of the State legislatures.

So with this mixture of the historical problem of the land grants, the mayorazgos, the ejido, and the municipio libre, is created the Alliance of Free City States. Some have accused Tijerina with trickery to enrich himself or asserted that he has

communistic ties. Others have hoped that he would develop into a genuine leader of the Mexican-Americans or, at least, that he would awaken them and everyone else to their problems.

Tijerina had always insisted that he opposed violence. Yet he made incendiary statements, such as a speech in Albuquerque in which he declared that the Watts Riot in California was just a preview of what would happen the whole length of the Rio Grande if his people were not given justice for the wrongs done them. "I don't want to copy the negroes," he explained later, "I tell my people the best way to get our rights is through the courts."

During late 1966, however, the Alianza movement began to get out of hand with acts of violence and terrorism. Tijerina and a few followers went to Carson National Forest, where they "arrested" two forest rangers for trespassing on lands claimed by their "Free City State." In June 1967, when several Alianza members were put in jail, they conducted a raid on the Rio Arriba County Courthouse at Tierra Amarilla, wounding two police officers and kidnapping a deputy sheriff and a newsman. It became necessary to mobilize State Police and National Guardsmen with tanks to restore order.

When he was arrested later, Tijerina and nine followers were charged with assault and kidnapping. During his trial at Las Cruces, Tijerina dismissed his lawyer and defended himself. In November 1968, he was acquitted of the kidnapping charges, but found guilty of assaulting the two forest rangers.

Out of jail during appeals of his case, Tijerina was involved in another incident. While attending an Alianza gathering in June 1969, Tijerina and his wife were said to have set fire to a ranger station sign in Santa Fe National Forest. When the station attendant tried to arrest Tijerina for destroying the sign, Tijerina took a rifle out of his car. Later he insisted that he was only trying to make a citizen's arrest of the Ranger without knowing that he was a federal officer. Imprisoned since that time, he was tried in Albuquerque last September and found guilty of that offense. Last month, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to review his earlier convictions under charges in Rio Arriba County and Carson National Forest.

Just recently from the Albuquerque jail, Tijerina has announced that he was resigning in great anger and for all time from the Alianza. He said that he favored justice, but never

independence or revolution against the government of the United States. He declared that he was tired of taking the blame for the violent acts and inclinations of others and tired of paying the debts of others.

Although Tijerina remains a hero to some, his actions have produced strong racial animosities in Northern New Mexico. According to one report at the end of 1968, Tijerina was protected by young bodyguards called Comancheros. The Anglo-American ranchers in Rio Arriba County were virtually under a state of seige. Terrorists had cut miles of fences, poisoned wells, killed cattle, and even set fire to houses. The State Police, many of whom are Spanish-Americans, were caught in the middle.

The strain of violence definitely has hurt the Alianza. Earlier this month, a committee of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York recommended a $40,000 grant to the Alianza from $3,000,000 set up by that church to assist the poor. The controversial nature of the situation is seen in the fact that the recommendation was made over the protest of the Right Rev. C. J. Kinsolving, Episcopal Bishop of New Mexico and Southwest Texas.

Bishop Kinsolving opposes the gift on grounds that the Alianza has practiced violence, and he has threatened to cut off all financial support of his diocese to the national church if its Executive Council next month approves the $40,000. The grant was also contested by the Assistant Archivist of New Mexico, an Episcopalian, but likewise an expert on Spanish land grant history, who has pronounced the Alianza claims to be fraudulent.

In a recent convention of the Alianza, Tijerina's brother, Ramón, was elected as President while Tijerina serves his prison term. A resolution was adopted at that convention calling for the creation of a separate union to be known as the "Republic of Aztlán," to include all of New Mexico, and parts of Arizona, California, and Texas. It was this action of endorsing a republic separate from the United States that led to Tijerina's resignation from the Alianza.

While there is the example of some Indian tribes that have been successful in litigating claims against the federal government, the Alianza may be riding a dead horse in its efforts to revive the historical background of conflict over land grants. It may serve to call attention to the sad history and unhappy plight of the Mexican-American, especially the rural population. Other-

wise the great majority of this minority group has come to the United States only since 1920, or even 1930, and cannot have any direct connection with old land claims. Furthermore, the great agrarian reform of modern Mexico would seem to have very little direct relation to the United States, because the history of Mexico has been so different from ours.

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THE RIO GRANDE FRONTIER—
BRIDGE OR BARRIER

By
RICHARD JOHNSON

Dr. Antonio Castro Leal, distinguished Mexican diplomat, critic, and author, inaugurated Trinity University's Centennial Conference on Latin American Studies last March with a stimulating address on "The Role of the Rio Grande Frontier and other Barriers to Confluence." He began with these words:

> *A frontier is a barrier. But it is also a view, a perspective, a landscape. What begins as sheer curiosity, in no time becomes attentive interest, and, later on, understanding and friendship. We have reached that happy stage.*

With due respect to Dr. Castro Leal, I should like to explore for a few minutes the less happy hypothesis that a frontier inevitably and continually creates tensions and difficulties leading to misunderstanding, sometimes to conflict, and that mutual acquaintanceship can generate repulsion or animosity as well as friendship.

We live in a world of nation-states, each of them sovereign. In this international ambience of anarchy each state pursues its national interest, as it alone perceives it, inhibited slightly, if at all, by international law and organization. Enforceable international agreements, law, and organization would require substantial delegations of sovereignty to international agencies. Consequently their influence seldom transcends any nation's interpretation of its primary responsibility—the protection of its national security and sovereign rights.

Because frontiers delimit territorial integrity, their inviolability always ranks as the highest national security objective. Mexico and the United States do not fortify their common frontier, but this neither diminishes its sanctity nor lessens the unwillingness of either state to permit even the slightest violation

of exclusive control of its side of the border. Thus, the frontier stands, as it has always stood, a double monumental wall of sovereign national pride and vigilance, not made by hands, but far stronger and more durable than a physical structure, and with an infinitely greater capability for generating ill-will and conflict. It will so remain as long as nationalism endures; and who would dare to predict the transformation of this dynamic force into effective internationalism during our time?

Consequently, a devil's advocate would characterize the role of any frontier as essentially negative, particularist, distortive, and dangerous. At a minimum it inhibits the free international exchange of people, capital, commodities, ideas, and values. Such an assessment conflicts basically with that of Dr. Castro Leal, and suggests at once the existence of a semantical problem. The preceding observations relate to the roles of frontiers in general, but Dr. Castro Leal clearly intended to apply his remarks to common frontiers or borderlands, and more specifically to the frontiersmen who, as he put it, "look at both sides."

Let us, then, examine the Rio Grande frontier from its aspect as a common border and at the role which this implies for the citizens of both nations who reside in the border areas. Does a common, as distinct from a non-contiguous frontier, bring special opportunities for closer and friendlier relationships or the reverse?

Mexican statesmen and scholars have not generally regarded the contiguity of the United States as a blessing. The witticism, ¡Pobre Mexico, tan lejos del Dios! "Poor Mexico, so far from God!, so close to the United States!" probably expressed the sentiments of most Mexicans a generation or two ago, and Mexican literature and public school instruction still keep alive memories of J. K. Polnsett, of the War of 1846-1848, the Gadsden Purchase, the border problems of the early Diaz regime, the Vera Cruz invasion, and the Pershing Expeditionary Force. All Mexican elementary school children learn about the territories which the United States annexed "unjustly" from Mexico; and Mexico's constitution contains provisions which restrict foreigners and their activities.

Conversely, we forget or ignore the fact that our Southwest, little more than a century ago, constituted half of Mexico's national patrimony; that Mexico has had to overcome far more difficult problems of geography, history, and societal structure

than has the United States; that we have practiced discrimination against Mexican-Americans and Mexicans residing among us; and that in the past we meddled in Mexico's domestic affairs in a most unwarranted manner. Indeed, the idealistic Woodrow Wilson proposed to teach Mexicans "to elect good men."

Who would deny furthermore, that the frontier has limited the flow of Mexican migration into the United States and of American technicians, professional workers, and capital into Mexico? Who would question seriously its role in inhibiting the importation of Mexican products into the United States and vice versa? Does it not seem abundantly clear that its existence helps to preserve cultural particularism and handicap cultural exchanges, thereby perpetuating misunderstandings and prejudice? The cultural differences unquestionably stimulates tourism, which to some extent broadens perceptions and certainly offers economic advantages to both countries, but does the tourist penetrate deeply and perceptibly enough into a foreign culture to understand it, and does he in turn carry abroad the finer values of his own culture?

Even a common frontier, then, helps to perpetuate mutual ignorance, distortions, confusion about values, intolerance, and lack of objectivity; and it greatly impedes peoples from moving from the past into the present in respect to their mutual relationships, limiting their capability for constructive cooperation.

Yet the common frontier has engendered some mutually helpful efforts between Mexico and the United States in a few important areas, including the joint hoof and mouth eradication campaign, the current campaign to control the black fly, and the *bracero* program. The variable and fickly qualities of the Rio Grande del Norte has also compelled efforts to agree on a mutually satisfactory method of determining where the border may lie from one day to the next. Like other common fluvial frontiers, it has required as well agreements on the use of tributaries, the division of waters for irrigation, power, and cognate matters.

The United States and Mexico long ago established the International Boundary and Water Commission to discuss the difficult, irritating, and multitudinous problems arising principally from the fluvial portions of its common frontier. Quite recently, the urgency of other problems generated by the common frontier led to the creation of the U. S.-Mexico Commission

for Border Development and Friendship. This body provides a continuing bilateral forum for the discussion of frontier problems, other than those related to delimitation and fluvial matters. It and the Boundary Commission thus supplement the work of the diplomatic and consular establishments and foreign offices of both nations by generating proposals and programs for solutions of border problems which might otherwise be overlooked. They also serve as channels through which private groups and individuals on both sides of the border can influence their governments.

On the official plane, then, the common frontier encourages a measure of bi-national consultation, planning, agreement, and endeavors, such as the Chamizal Settlement, the construction of the Falcon and Amistad Dams, agreements on joint use of waters of the Rio Grande, the Colorado and their affluents, and other constructive accords. Yet, common borders always, in the nature of things generate continuing official problems even when they encourage binational cooperation in the solution of some of them. Smuggling on both sides of the border; the illegal entry of Mexican nationals; disputes over commodity tariffs, quota or prohibitions; and problems of commuters all fall in but do not fill this vast category of continuing difficulties.

Obviously, then, the frontier serves both as a bridge and as a barrier; but any bridge carries a limited volume of traffic, and even the physical bridges across the Rio Grande now seem inadequate to the demands imposed. Since even common frontiers, then, tend to impede rather than encourage effective communication, could we interpret Dr. Castro Leal's thoughts more accurately by characterizing the role of the common frontier in the terms challenge and opportunity?

Populations living closest to both sides of the common frontier, should feel most keenly the challenge to arrive at better understanding and sense most readily the opportunity which contiguity affords them to do. But all of us must recognize that the hazards of contiguity require both nations to become more cognizant of each other's values and problems and to formulate our policies with greater recognition of them. This will not necessarily bring friendship or even liking, but it should contain tensions and facilitate the solution of some frontier engendered difficulties.

Have Mexicans and Americans as peoples arrived at under-

standing and friendship? Despite official assurances in this sense, I would suggest that very few persons on either side of the Rio Grande truly understand their neighbors' problems or appreciate their values. Dr. Castro Leal, when expressing optimism on this score, addressed a relatively small group of professional students of Latin America. Indeed he devoted most of his address to a plea for wider dissemination in the United States of information about Latin America's culture, psychology, and political tradition. Clearly neither the citizens of Mexico nor the United States have felt the challenge nor seized the opportunity posed by the common frontier, although we may draw some comfort, as does Dr. Castro Leal, from the increasing growth in scholarly interest in Latin American studies.

How can we as Latin Americanists infuse the mass media, educational institutions and the public with more interest in and, ultimately, a clearer understanding of Latin America? First, by recruiting more scholars to the field, because vast areas still remain uninvestigated. Second, by engaging more frequently in literary and other efforts at popularization. Here we must avoid either the temptation to indulge in excessive optimism about national friendships, so called, which endure only as long as nothing disturbs the mutuality of interests upon which they rest, or in excessive romanticism, which characterized so much of the writing about Latin America a generation or two ago. Third, we must engage in and press for the adoption of more inter-disciplinary programs and concentrations on Latin American studies. In this way we will bring workers from all relevant disciplines into the joint effort, achieve the benefits of cross fertilization, promote early adoption of new investigative techniques, and achieve more balanced synthesis of our findings. Fourth, we must work diligently at the polls, in public forums, and in private circles to encourage the adoption of public policy which will interpret the national interest broadly enough to comprehend the necessity of taking into account the interests and sensibilities of our neighbors, whenever feasible.

The preceding program, ambitious as it may seem, will not suffice to meet the challenge unless our Mexican neighbors react similarly. Unilateral good neighborliness cannot long command national support in any state and reciprocal efforts at understanding must seek to clear away emotional debris

caused by historical traumas. Ancient grievances, valid as they may have been, provide no sound basis for present policy or a better future.

Unhappily the character of the United States and its institutions have not attracted as many serious Mexican students as have the grievous incidents of diplomatic and military encounters between the two nations. Many statements about the United States in Mexican textbooks, literature, and in common usage by the mass media require objective re-examination to determine their initial and current validity. Above all, Mexican scholars have failed to enlighten their students and the public about the pluralistic character of our society, the immensely complicated character of our political structure, the very real efforts and sacrifices which the American people have made in the cause of international stability, the exceptional restraint which the United States have exercised in seeking just solutions to its disputes with far weaker powers, and, above all, the multiplicity and varying priorities of obligations imposed by the role of the United States as a super power.

Efforts of the Mexican government to bring more objective information about Mexico and its people to the United States might also be increased to mutual advantage. The establishment of cultural centers in Los Angeles and San Antonio offer interesting possibilities. Unfortunately these are not bi-national institutions, as are the centers in Mexico initially sponsored by the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs during World War II and more recently by USIA, but one can hope that they may take on this character.

Would the preceding suggestions, if adopted, create between the United States and Mexico enduring national friendship? By no means, because the very concept of friendship between national states rests on either a dangerous misunderstanding or deliberate glossing over of the essential fact that nation-states do not have emotions, loyalties, or other human characteristics of which friendship ranks as one of the finest. Nations, it cannot be emphasized too strongly, concern themselves with the defense and advancement of their national interests, as their officials interpret them. This means that international relationships endure only so long as they rest securely on mutual interest. Mexicans have friends north of the Bravo and we have Mexican friends, but our nations have relations with

each other and with other states which achieve varying degrees of intimacy or coolness as the mutuality of interest between them waxes and wanes. It is not helpful to boast of national friendships and probably harmful, because problems inevitably arise between nations which lessen their common interest, and, when this happens, the general publics become cynical or disillusioned.

The mutual programs envisaged should bring the broader understanding of each other's values and problems required to inform national policy decisions of Mexico and the United States with the greatest practical content of enlightened self interest. With improved mutual comprehension we will not necessarily love or admire each other more as nations, but we certainly will each be able to interpret our own national interests more intelligently. This should permit a readier solution of existing difficulties and prevent new ones, which inevitably will arise, from assuming dangerous proportions.

For the long term, broader mutual understanding may, hopefully, extend and improve people to people relationships, but it would be rash to assume that understanding necessarily brings approval and affection. Yet as professional Latin Americanists, would not most of us incline toward optimism? Indeed can any hope exist for the reduction of world and regional tensions save in the geometrical expansion of personal acquaintanceships and friendships between the citizens of national states? Can we hope in any other way eventually to reduce the barriers which nationalism erects at every boundary?

The Rio Grande obviously serves both as bridge and barrier. It also challenges us to build more bridges, to widen those which exist, and above all, to exert every effort, to seize every opportunity, to lower, and ultimately raze, the barriers at every bridge head.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN

By
ROBERTO J. GARZA

"I am a Mexican-American. No matter what I attempt to do, my dark skin always makes me feel that I will fail," so wrote an eighth grader in a Southwestern school who was attractive, bright, popular—and a Mexican-American.[1]

"It's always my parents telling me to be proud that I'm Mexican, and the school telling me to be American," a junior high school student cried out.[2]

These are but two of the million and a half children with Spanish surnames in the schools of five Southwestern states: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas, and nearly all of them Mexican-Americans.[3] Yet, how well they exemplify the frustrations and spiritual turbulence faced by the average Mexican student in the primary grades of our public schools. Furthermore, the desperate cries of these two exemplary students, not only echo the traumatic experiences of their peer group, but better still, the confused and uncertain way of life of the average adult Mexican-American community.[4] The adult Mexican-American, like these two students, is still reaching out and searching for a true meaning to his life, his true identity as an individual, and becoming more and more frustrated and hopeless with the passing of time because what he finds or imagines to be his "true image" as a Mexican-Amer-

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[1]Gardner, Bruce, "The Invisible Minority; Attitude of Schools Toward Spanish-Speaking Pupils," *Newsweek*, LXVIII (August 29, 1966), p. 46.

[2]Rowan, H., "A Minority Nobody Knows," *Atlantic*, CCIX (June, 1967), p. 49.

[3]Hacker, J., "Help for Spanish-Speaking Youngsters," American Education, III (May, 1967), p. 17.

[4]Carter, Thomas P., "The Negative Self-Concept of Mexican-American Students," *Illustrated School and Sociology*, XCVI (March 30, 1968), p. 217.

ican, it is always in a negative perspective. His ethnic group culture is considered void, depreciative and sometimes worthless. His reality has already been stereotyped negatively by the existing dominant society. He has been conditioned to believe and accept in every conceivable way that his language and his culture are no good. He must inevitably begin to suspect that he is no good. How can he succeed? And, if he cannot succeed, why try? This pessimistic outlook on life started as early as he was a child for he was indoctrinated to failure in the early years of his schooling, and each passing year only served to reinforce his feelings of failure and frustration.

How true were the philosophic words of that Spanish writer and thinker of the "Generation of '98," when he said,

> . . . that in each individual live four persons, and that he must choose between one in order to survive or exist as an individual. Number one, he must be that person that he perceives himself to really be. Two, he must be that person that he thinks he is; three, that one which he would aspire to be; and fourth, must be what others expect him to be.[5]
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> Such has been the history of this marginal citizen, The Mexican-American. A person who is caught between two ways of life, the Mexican and the American. This marginality presents the individual with more than normal difficulty in establishing his "self-identity," leading him to assume that he is inferior to others of other cultures:[6]

The remedy to this degrading and spiritual sickness on behalf of the Mexican-Americans, lies not in physical violence or destructive outbursts of emotionalism. The interruption and stoppage to this fatalistic cycle of life, rests solely with each individual of this Mexican-American ethnic group. He must counteract the forces of bigotry and prejudice by positively searching within his culture to find himself, his true identity of being. No organization, no matter how strong, how vociferous or how demanding it might be, will ever give each and every one of us the answer to what we are as individuals. For, before one

[5]Louis Jacks Da Silva, *Beginning Spanish, A Concept Approach* (Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 191.

[6]Carter, Thomas P., *op. cit.*, p. 154.

can become part of a "totality," one must exist as a "total person."

The Mexican-American has to become aware and appreciate that culture which is his, for it is an integral part of his "total concept" as a human being. But does he have a culture or sub-culture? What are some of its manifestations? Is it productive? Is it enriching enough to contribute of itself to the make-up of our present society? In short, is it a culture that he can be proud of to call his own? The answer to all of these questions is yes (and let's not get tangled up in the subleties or rhetoric of the language, or in "hair-splitting" definitions of terms, for sometimes meanings have a tendency to destroy the idea or thought of a question). Yes, the Mexican-American has a culture he can call his own.

His literature is limited, but not fruitless, for it is only now that it is beginning to flourish. His music is known both nationally and internationally, and his art is just a question of time before it is widely accepted.

Mexican-American professors like Dr. George Sánchez, Dr. Paredes (University of Texas at Austin), Dr. Sabino Ulibarrí (University of New Mexico), Dr. Ernest Galarza (University of California), Dr. Julián Zamora (Notre Dame), Dr. Ramón Ruiz (Smith College), Julián Nava (Valley State College) are but a few of the many teaching at institutions of higher learning, who have stood out in the field of critical writing. Their research and investigation have dealt mostly with bilingualism in our public schools, folkloric music, Spanish linguistics, Sociology and History of Latin America. This group of men of letters are the precursors in the Mexican-American literature. In being the vanguard in this genre of literature, they have influenced other young Mexican-American writers to project themselves on a more contemporary level.

El Espejo—The Mirror is a brown paper-back reflecting the "brown" literary hopes and aspirations in this country. It is a collection of painfully honest-writings by Mexican-Americans, who having found their literary voice, have created their own outlet in Quinto-Sol Publications, for what they consider to be Mexican-Americans alternatives for Mexican-American problems and affairs.[1]

[1]Ortego, Philip Dayreagh, "Mexican-American Literature," *Nation*, CCIX (October 10, 1969), p. 356.

The members of this "Nueva Ola" (New Wave) literary movement are:

> Philip D. Ortego, professor of English at New Mexico State University and founder of Quinto-Sol publications, who explains the symbolic nature of the book title, *El Espejo* is a book of main interest to Mexican-Americans, for to know themselves, some need nothing more than to see their own reflection in this work.[8]
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> Octavio Romano, a Berkeley trained anthropologist and author of *Goodbye Revolution—Hello Slum*, stresses the point that Mexican-Americans are not attempting to maintain an idiosyncratic identity, but rather, that they are Americans with as rich a heritage as any other group of Americans.[9]
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> Rudy Espinosa, a native of San Francisco, California, works and develops an existentialistic theme, "a la José Arreola," in his literary work entitled, "¿Qué Tal Rocha?"; a book in which the author unveils the constant search for "Self-Realization" as an individual—as a minority member of society, all this taking place during the course of a fragmented journey from San Francisco County Hospital, where he was born, to the groves of the academy. Furthermore, Espinosa writes that along his academic journey, he learned that it was not material comfort he sought, but the knowledge of how to live with his fellow man and with himself as a Mexican-American.[10]

Of all the young writers of this "Generation," Nick Vaca and Octavio Romano show more promise because of their uniqueness of style and thematic content. In "The Week of the Life of Manuel Hernández," Vaca manipulates the element of "mixed-media" with great skill, while Romano's "A Rosary for Doña Marina," relies on historical symbols and traditional narrative."

In short, *El Espejo* is a product by a young group of creative

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

writers of our time. Their themes deal with present poignant problems that confront the Mexican-American in his bicultural society, and the constant search for identity within its walls. With the brevity of time, this young generation will emerge as the "pace-setters" for others to pursue their path in the contemporary Mexican-American literature."

The Lower Río Grande Valley in Texas is the name applied to a fifty mile wide strip of delta land starting on the Gulf of México and extending along the north bank of the Río Grande for 100 miles. Very little was known about this part of Texas until Colonel Sam A. Robertson built the first railroad into this area." His endeavor marked the beginning of a new era for this region, for with the coming of the railroad the lands were developed, and soon this region of Texas was to gain national recognition for the abundance of vegetables and citrus fruits.

The "Magic Valley," as this part of Texas is nowadays known, is not only important for its agricultural products, but more so, in our case, for the contribution that it has made in the field of the Mexican-American folkloric music.

The Valley of the Río Grande is the cradle or the birthplace of the Mexican-American "folkloric" and popular music. Back in the early 1940's in this geographical part of the United States, "folk-music" players like Narciso Martínez ("El Huracan del Valle"), Pedro Ayala ("El Rey de la Accordión"), and then newcomer Rubén Vela, made known to the Mexican-American people, the music that was part of their culture. They called this music "La Música Tejana."

Their personal polkas, waltzes, and schottisches were a type of music produced by the employment of an accordion, guitar and bass (fiddle). The low socio-economic Mexican-American put his signature to this type of music and called it his own. He identified with it. He took it with him when he migrated to our northern states to do seasonal work in the fields. The Música Tejana" was to him, what "La Jota" was to the Aragonese of northern Spain or the "Hill-Billy" music is to the "Oahies" of that state. From Mercedes to Mexicali, from San José to Sunnyside, Washington, and from San Benito to Saginaw, Michigan, the Mexican-American spread good-will with his music.

"Ibid., p. 259.

"Stilwell, H., "Portrait of the Magic Valley," *New Republic*, CXVI (April 7, 1947), p. 16-18.

Meanwhile, during this period of time, composition music or band music of the Mexican-American was nil, or non-existent. The so-called Mexican-American bands copiously played Mexican arrangement of the moment. Then, for the first time, in the late 40's, a Mexican-American band leader created his own music. He came forward with his rendition of a polka entitled "Monterrey." He was Beto Villa, a longtime resident of the Valley, but at that time living and still lives in Falfurrias. His compositions and his playing skyrocketed him to national fame in the circles of music lovers who were Spanish/speaking. He outbooked, outplayed all other renown orchestras in the Spanish communities in the United States. Many were the times when orchestras of international fame, such as that of Luis Alcarez or Pérez Prado, gave way to the popularity of this band leader when playing in the same city.

The 50's saw the rebirth of the folkloric music of yesteryears, but with more refinement in arrangement and delivery. For now, more instruments were added to obtain the same sounds, but with different inspirations. Instead of the three-piece instrumental group, there were five now. The addition of voices and instruments (drums, guitars, "claves") gave the old music a new, finer quality. Inspiration to compositions for folkloric music included South American tunes, and popular Western songs. No longer was the folkloric music limited to recounting or singing of ballads or romantic tunes of the last century (with the Mexican influence). The new trend was experimentation and innovation.

Outstanding both as an innovator and empresario of the new "música tejana" is Paulino Bernal, for not only has he renovated a dormant art, but more important, popularized it for everybody to enjoy it. This young, talented, and very successful man has taken this folkloric music to other countries where it has been very highly acclaimed.

While Mr. Bernal was introducing his music to Puerto Rico and Costa Rica, the Valley was busily giving birth to a new "Generation" of Mexican-American music composers. The Vanguardist to this new movement was the late Oscar Villarreal, followed by the ever-so-popular Carlos Guzmán of McAllen; and it is still Carlos Guzmán and his quartet who dominate the scene in the field of pop music for the young generation.

The pinnacle of all Mexican-American music ever to be com-

posed has been reached by Rafael Ramírez, better known as the "Mexican music composer outside of México." A native of McAllen and present partner of Falcón Recording Company, he has composed some 50 to 60 songs, and his music has been used in about 25 movies in México and abroad. He wrote "Llorás" for the late Javier Solís at a time when this singer was still relatively unknown. It was for this melody, primarily, that Rafael Ramírez won México's most coveted award, the "Gold Microphone" in 1966, an award given only to the outstanding composer of the year. He was one of three composers to receive it. The other two were Augustín Lara (the "Irving Berlin of México"), and Alvaro Carrillo, also from México.

A pulsating romanticism flows through all the musical compositions of Rafael Ramírez, making it very popular in the latin world. This is why the best recording artists such as Los Panchos, Juan Mendoza, Daniel Santos, Irma Dorantes, Tin-Tan, Luis Aguilar, and many others delight in recording his arrangements. Rafael Ramírez is truly the outstanding Mexican-American composer of yesterday and today. His music belongs to all who understand the meaning of the Spanish language.

There are many others who have also soared to national fame. Singers such as René and René, Vikki Carr and the late Eva Garza, excelled not only in the Mexican-American community, but equally so, in the English-speaking world.

Music has not been the only media by which Mexican-American artists have gained recognition, for there are a few that have outshone on stage and screen. Lupe Véliz, Pedro Armendáriz and Anthony Quinn are only a few of the familiar names to stage and movie goers.

Thus, all of the above mentioned professional people, are a living proof that a positive, fertile and tangible Mexican-American culture does exist, for their work is a symbolic reflection of it. These writers, musicians, composers, artists, in being representatives of an existing culture, have given the average Mexican-American a sense of belonging, a quest for being. But lest we forget, that the term "Mexican-American" has a duality of meaning. It is a cognate which means the unification of two cultures in spiritual thought and being, and that the roots of the Mexican-American are planted in this country of his—the United States. That without the "Mexican"

or "American" acceptance way of life, he ceases to exist as an individual, which is far greater than merely "Mexican" or "American."

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